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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: URIBE ON CUBA AND CASTRO SUCCESSION

REF: A. STATE 125684

[1](#)B. LIMA 3103

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood; Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

[1](#)1. (C) During an August 7 meeting with Commerce Secretary Gutierrez and Treasury Secretary Paulson immediately following his second inauguration (septel), President Uribe touched on Cuba and the Castro succession. Ambassador Wood had previously delivered Ref A demarche points on the importance of democratic transition in Cuba to then-Foreign Minister Carolina Barco. Uribe said he had a positive relationship with Castro. He noted Castro had been instrumental in negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN). Castro also enabled the GOC to maintain a dialogue with Chavez. "Chavez doesn't listen to Lula; he only listens to Castro," Uribe said. Uribe also noted that he wanted to avoid or minimize Cuban patronage of Colombian insurgents. Still, Uribe said he would not attend the next Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting, slated for September 14-15 in Havana, because he objects to the NAM's increasingly anti-American rhetoric.

[1](#)2. (C) Uribe did not offer to make a public statement about succession, but said he wanted to help promote a democratic transition in Cuba. Noting that Florida Governor Jeb Bush had encouraged him to meet with dissidents on his next visit to Cuba, he asked for guidance on what additional steps Colombia could take.

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